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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

## **MEMORANDUM**

## The Situation in Vietnam

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**Top Secret** 

112 12 January 1967



Approved For Release 2007/03/14 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001600010003-5
Information as of 1600 12 January 1967
HIGHLIGHTS
Operation CEDAR FALLS, the largest allied operation of the war, continues to destroy Communist installations and supplies as it sweeps through the Iron Triangle area of Binh Duong Province.  I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Elements of multibattalion Operation CEDAR FALLS have located more Viet Cong base areas (Para. 1). Nearly 2,000 tons of rice have been seized (Para. 2). A Viet Cong attack against Binh Thuy Airfield near Can Tho in the Mekong Delta caused light damage (Para. 3) US Marine artillery killed 26 Communist soldiers in an action 15 miles southwest of Tam Ky (Para. 4).
II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: The first draft of the constitution was circulated to the Constituent Assembly; the deputies have recessed until 16 January to study the draft in detail (Paras. 1-3).
IV. Other Communist Military Developments:

IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

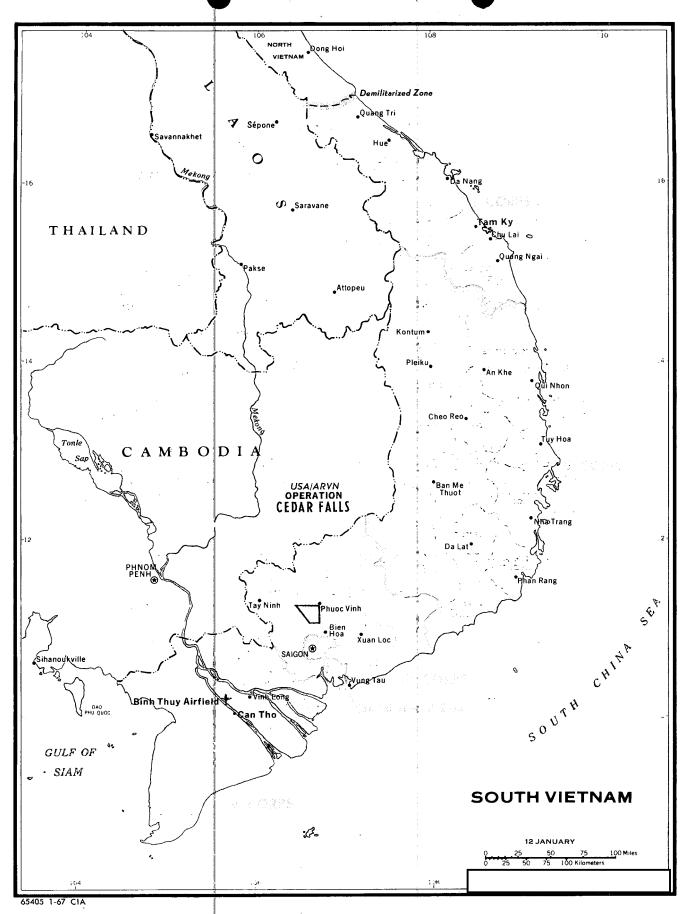
V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

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## I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

- 1. Units of the 23-battalion Operation CEDAR FALLS sweeping the jungled Iron Triangle area of Binh Duong Province reported uncovering more Viet Cong base camps and bunkers on 12 January. A regimental-size base camp, which included headquarters bunkers and four large mess halls, was discovered. The camp, like smaller ones previously overrun, will be destroyed by bulldozers and explosives.
- 2. Nearly 2,000 tons of rice have been seized in the six-day-old operation, the largest allied operation of the war, and 1,400 tons of this have been destroyed. US troops have also reported finding drums containing more than 100 gas masks manufactured in Communist China. Communist losses are numbered at 196 killed and 42 captured compared with US casualties of 20 killed and 102 wounded.
- 3. Viet Cong guerrillas attacked Binh Thuy Airfield six miles northwest of Can Tho in the Mekong Delta Province of Sa Dec with 50-60 rounds of mortar and recoilless rifle fire early on 12 January. One US helicopter was heavily damaged and two observation aircraft were lightly damaged. Several buildings were also heavily damaged. There were no American casualties.
- 4. Twenty-six Communist soldiers were killed by US Marine artillery in Quang Tin Province during a 30-minute barrage on 11 January. The action, in support of a US Special Forces unit, took place about 15 miles southwest of Tam Ky. There were no American casualties.

12 January 1967

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## II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

- 1. At the 11 January session of the Constituent Assembly, the chairman of the drafting committee formally submitted the committee's draft of the constitution to the deputies. The assembly then adjourned until 16 January to study the draft. In spite of the atmosphere of optimism which has been generated recently in the assembly concerning its relations with the government, the final chapter in the draft constitution could become a major issue.
- 2. That chapter empowers the assembly to establish the procedures for the presidential and national assembly (legislative) elections. Moreover, it authorizes the assembly to become the lower house of the legislature, with all the powers granted in the constitution, while the executive machinery is being established and until the lower legislative house is elected. This chapter, if left in the constitution, would, in effect, make the Constituent Assembly an interim legislature for as many as eight months after the promulgation of the constitution. It is possible, however, that the present proposed transitional arrangements will be altered before the constitution is ratified by the assembly.
- 3. There have been no reports of the Directorate's reaction to the assembly's attempt to prolong its life and broaden its powers. The views of the individual members of the Directorate do not appear to be unified. Premier Ky has reportedly indicated that the assembly if it was to his liking, could turn itself into an interim legislature. It appears, however, that other methods of setting up the necessary electoral machinery are under consideration by the military leaders.

12 January 1967

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